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The Green Book

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by

Evelyn Contreras

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Abstract

The Green Book

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Abstract: Come into a journey where you will examine the nature of Evelyn Contreras work through the lens of Los Angeles. You will be guided by BETA-KAR system which will take you to each portal.

BETA-KAR will inform you of the work and keep you safe. Please enjoy the ride.

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CHAPTER 1: THE ARRIVAL

You arrive at LAX at 8:15 AM in the middle of July. You're surprised by how busy the airport is and how the concrete building traps the cars' roar, hum, and purr. You wait in the middle lane for the bus carrier to arrive. The bus arrives, opens its doors and the speaker automation system says, "Welcome to Los Angeles."

The bus drops you at the car rental facilities. The doors open and you are guided by the color carpet to the front desk. The front desk only has monitors. As you approach, the monitor turns on.

Monitor: "Welcome to Los Angeles. How can I help you?"

You: "I would like a car."

Monitor: "Please swipe your card on side of the monitor."

You swipe the card.

Monitor: "Thank you. The payment has been authorized. Please grab your chip on the bottom of the monitor. The chip will authorize the car to turn on. Please be aware that all cars come with a BETA-KAR guiding system. With the advancement of technology each BETA-KAR guiding car system is a sentient being with its own feelings and personality. Please choose wisely. Enjoy your Visit."

The doors behind the Monitor open. You grab the chip and enter through the doors. You walk through the concrete parking lot and you become flustered by the selection, but decide to pick a Silver Honda Civic. You rationalize the Honda Civic because of its gas economy. You enter the car which has the fake "new car" smell. You press the button to ignite the ignition, start the engine and hear an electronic sound warning you that something else turned on as well.

You hear a woman's voice through the speakers of the car speak.

BETA-KAR: "Welcome to Los Angeles, a city that makes nonsense of history, but breaks all the rules. A super city of the future, a metropolitan of southern

California. For discriminating visitors, this car has been equipped with BETA-KAR guiding system courtesy of Pennywise car rental and Sunset gasoline (jingle*) – “the clean gasoline”. To help you concentrate on your driving, BETA-KAR will shut itself off interminably through your journey. Here is the switch off tune (ping). To understand Evelyn Contreras’s work, you must first understand the haphazardness of Los Angeles. One can say that Los Angeles is constantly code-switching as well. Changing based on the new set of immigrants that inhabit and call Los Angeles home. Since Los Angeles is always in flux, it can be perceived as a sprawling mess with no culture. Before you begin your journey please choose from one of the destinations as followed.”

“Should you go to the beach cities where sun and surf are abundant or, should you go 20 miles northeast to Hollywood the city of entertainment, or should you go 15 miles south to Palos Verdes a city of mountains and private suburbia, or should you go 20 miles southeast to Long Beach to the retired Queen Mary which has become a hotel and the ridiculous Thump island which is an oil refinery with colored lights. Or, 15 miles to downtown to look at old

monuments like the Bradbury building and the Plaza church which has been there since California was Mexico.”

CHAPTER 2: WATTS

You ponder for a second, intrigued by the BETA-KAR options, but know full well that you have set an itinerary for yourself. You press the search icon on the BETA-KAR navigation screen and press W-A-T-T-S-(SPACE)-T-O-W-E-R-S.

BETA-KAR: "Now you are ready to go. Follow the signs to Century Blvd. Turn right on Sepulveda. You will be going through the LAX tunnel. Stay in the right lane, you will see a sign for the east 105 freeway. You are now on one of the many elevated freeways in Los Angeles. This perspective is not common in many cities. Get on the off-ramp of Wilmington Ave. Turn left on 112th St., then turn right of 107th St. Your destination should be on your left."

You park and see the large towers.

BETA-KAR: "Welcome to the Watts Towers. A National Historic Landmark, which was made by Italian immigrant Sabato Rodia from 1921-1954. The work is considered "outsider art." The towers are made of porcelain, tile, glass, seashells, figurines, and broken mirrors. Rodia could transform cheap material

to show its resilience through the form. Which to an extent embodies the resilience of the city of Watts. The city is notorious for the Watts riot of 1965. Due to repeated discrimination by police toward the black community, tensions reached a boiling point causing a six-day riots that killed 34 people, left 1,032 injured, and \$40 millions of property damage.

To an extent the Watts Towers and the city of Watts are fitting for Evelyn Contreras's work, especially *Case Study .01*. Her experiences in the summer of 2017 were polarizing. *Case Study 0.1*, is a structure that is intended to embody this high and low experience either through form and dimension.

Please grab the headphones below the monitor. BETA-KAR will be in communication with you through the headphones."

You notice a compartment open below the monitor and grab the headphones and put them on.

BETA-KAR: "Please step out of the car. In front of the Watts tower entrance there should be a glowing blue button. Please press it."

You step out of the car and enjoy the 84-degree weather. You find the button in front of the entrance and press it. You look to your left and notice a blue door that came out of nowhere.

BETA-KAR: "Please enter the Blue door."

You turn the knob and enter a dark room which has a cathedral-like form. You walk around the structure and notice the walls around the structure having shapeshifting shadows that are in constant motion.

BETA-KAR: "What you are witnessing is *Case Study .01*. Evelyn wanted to make a miniature cathedral-like form which held the dimensions of a holding cell. If you would like you can enter the structure which only holds one person.

There is an embedded tension of creating an object that was inspired by the cathedral form but was made of cardboard. There is a perceived connection of the anti-monumental based on the size and the cheap material. The panel design is influenced by hexagonal rooms. By having a hexagonal pattern, it causes an interference of translation through form and pattern. The hexagonal pattern can translate in many ways like honeycomb or lace pattern. Since Evelyn has a different background, she is always in decoding mode, so she forces you to be lost in translations with her.

Case Study .01, has some built-in contradictions which are inherent in form and presentation. The form creates the illusion of a mass even though it's made up of negative space. Since each cardboard panel is an inch apart from each other your eye capture different angles of each panel at the same time thus creating a lenticular effect. Even though the object is stagnant it reacts to your movement which changes the shadows on the walls."

You notice the shadow and light refraction landing on your skin which makes your presence just as much a part of the work. Your consciousness tells you the

light reflects nighttime. The structure itself alludes to architecture, but the moving shadows allude to a landscape.

The blue door appears again and you turn the knob to exit the room.

You are once again outside the entrance of the Watts Towers. You enter the Watts Towers. You enjoy the use of materials and how the sunlight interacts with the use of glass and ceramic.

CHAPTER 3: BOYLE HEIGHTS

You get back in the car. The heat and walk has made you hungry. So, you type in the BETA-KAR search icon B-O-Y-L-E-(SPACE)-H-E-I-G-H-T-S-(COMMA)-G-U-I-S-A-D-O-S.

BETA-KAR: "Great choice you picked one of Jonathan Golds top best Mexican Restaurants in Los Angeles. Head west to 107th St. toward Graham Ave and turn left on Willowbrook. Continue onto 112th St. then turn right on Wilmington Ave. Stay to your right and take the I-105 East ramp for 3 miles. Stay to your right and take I-710 North toward Pasadena. Stay on I-710 freeway.

Before I take you to Guidados. Please accept this detour. If you can to your right, please park your car on the side of the freeway."

You park the car on the emergency lane and turn on your emergency lights.

BETA-KAR: "The concrete river bed can be seen from the freeway. The concrete channel infrastructure was made because of the frequent flooding that

would occur in the early 20th century. The resulting infrastructure has caused a collection of pollution and agricultural and urban runoff. Which has also brought a mix of people entering the riverbed either to relax from a drunken night, riding their bike to their job, or tagging the concrete. The riverbed is always in flux, just like Evelyn's piece *SIC:9999*. Will you please put on headphones and exit the car."

You place your headphones on and exit the car.

BETA-KAR: "To your right you should see a 710 freeway North sign. On the pole, there is another blue glowing button. Please press it and enter the blue door."

You walk over to the sundrenched sign, press the button and turn the knob.

You enter a room cast in blue light with a structure in the middle.

BETA-KAR: "What you are witnessing is *SIC:9999*. Please don't hesitate to walk around. The work through its elements is in constant in flux. The shapes

themselves allude to parts within the urban environment. If you look at the dark blue pillars they resemble the scaffolding in buildings, but the acrylic elements within the dark blue pillars resembles stained glass which would be seen in old churches. The cut-out Mylar that stands tall behind the actual form has a mix of translations. They resemble decorative windows or even weeds.

The surface of the work has many connection to the concept of decay. Thinking about the precariousness of living in southern California. A landscape that within itself in in constant metamorphosis through mudslide and fires. Leaving the remain of "what was." The architecture serving as an anthropological discovery of "what could have been." The blue casted light serves as a discovering point about memory for Evelyn. Remembering all the times within her walks witnessing all the loss that was taken from nature and slowly witnessing the life coming back.

The interpretation of the piece doesn't have a solution, but if it did it only lives within you. Accepting uncertainty through the read of the work at its best

creates phenomenological effect within each of us which creates an imagination with its own idiosyncrasy."

You walk around the structure enjoying the blue light on your skin. Reminding you of the full moon casting light on the landscape of the night sky. You turn around to see the blue door and turn the knob. You are swallowed by the sunlight. You are back on the side of the freeway. Alerted by the beeping of cars. You walk toward the car and enter.

BETA-KAR: "Please merge back to the 710-North freeway for six miles. You will now see the I-5 North entrance ramp stay to your left to enter. Exit the off ramp toward Cesar E. Chaves Ave. Turn right on Cesar E. Chaves Ave. Guisados will be to your right."

You look to your right and see a small building, which is reddish/orange which has black iron fencing around it. You park the car in the Guisados lot, which fits five cars.

BETA-KAR: "Welcome to Boyle Heights. From your car you see the stucco building, which are Spanish style homes. Most of the building give the allusion of a different time. The buildings surface relationship to time correlates with Evelyn Contreras work *Within the Folds*. Please place your headphones, step out of the car, walk toward the yellow stucco buildings and ring the bell for apartment C."

You step out of the car and walk toward the stucco apartments covered in vegetation. You find an entrance to the apartment lot near the mural, enter the small walk way and ring the bell to apartment C. The door opens and you see concrete structure in the middle of the wall. The door closes behind you. You walk toward it and notice the surface is revealing itself and then hiding depending on your movement. You notice the surface quality is monochromatic, but is shifting based on its glossy quality.

BETA-KAR: "What you are witnessing is *Within the Folds*. This is not ruin. The materials have been shifted to resemble a different time. You might be speculating your own reality and surroundings. Don't worry, by making the

material feel as though it has accumulated time it starts to resemble a piece of a ruin.

Contreras raises the question on how much do we depend on a materials to tell us "what is time?" The question is exasperated because the forms are made by utilizing the laser cutter and creating molds, which are distorted. Messing with your cognitive understanding of plaster material not being a solid. Forcing the plaster material to fit within the lexicon of paper by being thin, and fragile.

Makes you question your preconceived notions of material and time.

By Evelyn examining the handmade with digital technologies gives *Within the Fold* a prop like quality. The prop like quality digs in deeper to evoke a surreal experience through color, light, shadow and form."

You stare at the form some more because it reminds you of an archaeological find of some ancient culture that hasn't been researched extensively. The design on the form feels like relief embroidery, but also reminds you of ariel

view that appears and disappears. You notice the door open again and precede to leave.

You step out of the car and suddenly feel the heat from the concrete which has increased to 99 degrees. You walk into the restaurant to feel relief. The fan drying the sweat that was built up from the small walk from the parking lot. You order three tacos, one chicharron, one chorizo, and the other of camarones and to quench your thirst you order a jamaica. You take a bite of the spicy tacos, while looking at the cooks making the handmade tortillas.

CHAPTER 3: OLD LOS ANGELES ZOO

You get back in the car and click on the BETA-KAR search icon and spell out O-L-D-(SPACE)-L-O-S-(SPACE)-A-N-G-E-L-E-S-(SPACE)-Z-O-O.

BETA-KAR: " Old Los Angeles Zoo is abandoned, but has become a park site for hiking and picnics. It's a great choice to see the Los Angeles landscape. Head on to East Cesar E. Chavez and turn right on State St. Before you say goodbye to Boyle Heights, please park your car next to the billboard promoting the Lowrider Super Show on your right."

You park your car next to the billboard.

BETA-KAR: "Please put your headphones on, get out of the car, approach the pole under the billboard and press the glowing blue button.

You step out of the car, approach the pole, press the button and see another blue door. You turn the knob and enter a white room. You see a monochromatic painting that has LED lights glowing pink. As you approach it

you notice the material is pearl holographic with pearl ink on top. The work once again reveals and hides itself depending on your movement.

BETA-KAR: "If you are lucky once you leave this room you will see the striving lowrider culture manifested by the predominant Chicano culture that resides in Boyle Heights. The car community is important in Los Angeles but especially in Chicano groups. Car culture has been important in Evelyn's work especially *In Transition*.

What you are witnessing in this room is *In Transition*. *In Transition* is influenced by Chicano car culture, and Malevich's *Supremacist Composition: White on White* painting. Resulting in a "Tricked Out" print by using LED's, holographic paper and plastic. By using cheap materials like MDF, spray paint, silkscreen and acrylic. *In Transition* serves as a self-aware failed monochromatic painting.

In Transition being a failed Supremacist painting is as well linked to the material history of the design collective, Memphis group. The Memphis group rejected the modernist movement by exploring Radical design which embraced

distortion and irony. *In Transition* lives within that ideology. By the Memphis group making furniture like the *Bel Air Chair* which utilizes composite board and cheap plastic laminate. The Memphis group is pointing out their humor and the joke between concept and material.

In Transition lives within that space of humor and absurdity. One could even say faux-chic. By looking at the Suprematism movement and postmodernism movement by inserting Chicano culture material lexicon is to point out the distortion and irony of coveted culture movements. *In Transition* works as a big visual irony. By juxtaposing art movements from low and high culture. One can see the indifference we have toward cultural history."

You look at the piece a while longer. Noticing the acrylic pieces on top of one another. Looking closely at the hidden details like the edge of the acrylic and board are florescent pink which mimics the pink light glowing behind the piece. You also notice that the piece was made by twelve panels which relate to one another.

You hear a cracking sound and turn around to see the door open. You head over to the door and enter Boyle Heights again being introduced to the sound of mariachi music from a distance. You walk toward the car and enter.

BETA-KAR: "Now you are ready to go. Turn left to merge onto I-5 North. Stay on I-5 North for 6.3 miles and take Crystal Springs Dr. exit. As you can see the greenery is becoming more abundant. Take the exit ramp off Crystal Spring Dr. and make a right-on Crystal Spring Dr. Turn left onto Griffith Park Dr. Turn left and you should see a parking lot. From the parking lot, you should be able to see a set of rocks that have bars on them. Those are remnants of the Old Los Angeles Zoo. The construction of the cages was supposed to mimic the mountain landscape of Los Angeles even though they are artificial.

Please place your headphones on, and walk over to cage 2. Inside the should another blue button. Please press it"

You step out of the car and realize that the temperature has gone down to 78 degrees. You walk toward the old Zoo and notice the colorful graffiti inside the

cages. You walk over to cage 2 and see the blue button and press it. You see another blue door in between the rocks and turn the knob and open to.

You are in another room which has two different light sources hitting a botanical structure in the middle of the room. One of the lights is a deep blue another is a purple light which has a UV quality. You walk around the botanical structure and notice how the light is shifting the color tone of the structure.

BETA-KAR: "Artificial landscapes are common in Los Angeles and have influences Evelyn's work like *Botanic Vernacular*.

What you are witnessing in this room is *Botanic Vernacular*. As a child, she was fortunate to attend Lotus Land which is a garden made in the early 20th century by Ganna Walska who was interested in making dramatic theatrical gardens. She started becoming interested in making her own dramatic plant life.

Botanic Vernacular starts dissecting the micro structures of a plant using architectural construction sites as a metaphor as building blocks of botanic life.

The form employs patterns, which plants have on micro level, but are taken from architecture diagrams. The materials have different thickness and luminosity which are triggered by its blue and UV environment, which performed like plants following the sun.

The materials are rooted in construction sites by being formed with wood, acrylic, house paint and spray paint. The silkscreen process of a gradation pull simulates petal color arrangements. The tension of exploiting materials which are lifeless and rendering them naturalistic can highlight our notions of what constitutes real nature.”

You look closely at the botanic structure and notice the connection the structure has to bioluminescent phenomenon's. The orange in the structure glows like neon orange, but fades to lighter neon. The bright color reminds you poisons plants and animals that make their predators aware that they are dangerous.

You feel a breeze and turn around and notice the door has been open. You walk toward the door and exit the room. You feel the light breeze and hear a ringing sound coming toward you. You hear someone from a distance screaming "PALETAS, (RING, RING, RING) PALETAS"

You notice that the cages are smaller than average. You enjoy the breeze and decide to walk back to the car.

CHAPTER 5: VENICE

You enter the car and type on the BETA-KAR search icon V-E-N-I-C-E-(SPACE)-B-O-A-R-D-W-A-L-K.

BETA-KAR: "Venice has been evolving. Once you arrive to Venice the homes further to the right of the boardwalk have canals which are inspired by Venice, Italy. Venice has been in a tug a war with alternative culture and moneymakers. The moneymakers are the ones who want to see Venice beach become another executive ghetto, with plastic people in plastic boats.

Now you are ready to go.

Head east toward Griffith Park Dr. and make a right. Make another right onto Crystal Spring Dr. and make a left on I-5 South ramp. Keep to your right and take 110 freeway South. Keep to your left to continue toward I-10 West for 10.6 miles. Exit toward 4th St and make a left. Turn right on Pico Blvd and make a left onto Neilson Way. Continue onto Pacific Ave. and make a right onto Market St and a left on Speedway. You should find parking in front of Venice Beach Mart.

Make sure you add money to the parking meter. Please place the headphones on and walk toward the door with the white metal screen. Please ring the bell"

You exit the car, add a dollar fifty to the meter, approach the rusted white door and ring the bell. The door opens by itself. You enter a dark room with purple light coming from the corner of the room. The purple light is refracting from cut out pieces of mirrored acrylic. You walk toward the structure and notice the image which is orange neon halftone of a modern structure at an angle.

BETA-KAR: "Once you leave this room enjoy the neon lights that are on the boardwalk and the active atmosphere. Signage is everywhere in Venice as well as saturated colors. You will see plenty of neon color and plastic. This embodiment of material is also referred to Evelyn's work *Untitled*.

What you are witnessing in this room is *Untitled*. The manipulation of light is used to exaggerate form. Researching the history of cinema and how color is used especially now with films like *Only God Forgives*, *Blade Runner* and *The Fifth Element*. These are films which use light to create an environment which is

harsh, and uncaring. Having a viewer come into this space with harsh colors creates an atmosphere which is uneasy. Creating a psychological affect with color that is attached through cinema's current trend. Forcing you to feel like you are walking into a movie scene.

What is also expanded is how photography and cinema dramatize perspective. Looking at animation in terms of distorted perspective and trying to quantify perspective through form within an actual living space. Resulting in a form that resembles a still shot stuck in time.

Cinema Du was also a form of inspiration because they favored style over substance and spectacle over narrative. There is also an exploration of high and low culture. The high culture which is in the fabrication process of production. The low culture by utilizes neon colors and black light."

You look at the structure and notice the acrylic having the ability to disappear. Leaving the halftone to be the only visible thing one can see. You notice the

ability for the imagery to look like a digital holograph that has glitch from the top and bottom, but is solidified in the middle.

You hear a click from behind you and notice the door open. You walk toward the door and smell the sea water from a distance. You walk toward the boardwalk. You notice the heat has gone down 64 degrees. Since sunset is approaching you notice the lights that are illuminating the tourist stores and pipe shops. You walk toward the Muscle beach park and notice the remaining bodybuilders finishing up their last sets. In the process, you notice a walkway through the green lawn and tall palm trees and walk toward a large crowd. From a distance, you hear wheels rolling on the pavement. You get to the crowd and notice waves of cement and realize it's a skate park. You gleam at the skaters for five minutes and decide to continue through the cement path and find yourself in front of a fountain and look at the sunset.

You realize how much the sun is a plastic fluorescent spectacle coming down on the manmade splendor. You wonder, "when will I be back?"